United Nations A/C.3/55/L.55

General Assembly

Distr.: Limited
2 November 2000

Original: English

Fifty-fifth session

Third Committee

Agenda item 114 (b)

Human rights questions: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

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Human rights and extreme poverty

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[1] the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,[2] the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,[2] and other human rights instruments adopted by the United Nations,

Considering the relevant provisions of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993,[3] and of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, adopted by the World Summit on 12 March 1995,[4] and the outcome of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly entitled: "World Summit for Social Development and Beyond:

[1] Resolution 217 A (III).

[2] See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

[3] A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III.

[4] *Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. IU, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

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Achieving Social Development for All in a Globalizing World", adopted at Geneva on 1 July 2000,[5]

Recalling its resolutions 47/196 of 22 December 1992, by which it declared 17 October International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, 48/183 of 21 December 1993, by which it proclaimed 1996 International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, 50/107 of 20 December 1995, by which it proclaimed the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006), 51/97 of 12 December 1996 on human rights and extreme poverty, 52/193 of 18 December 1997, in which it emphasized the follow-up to the Decade, and 53/146 of 9 December 1998 on human rights and extreme poverty,

Recalling also its resolution 52/134 of 12 December 1997, in which it recognized that the enhancement of international cooperation in the field of human rights was essential for the understanding, promotion and protection of all human rights,

Recalling further its resolution 54/232 of 22 December 1995 in which it expressed its deep concern that the number of people living in extreme poverty continues to increase, with women and children constituting the majority and the most affected group,

Bearing in mind Commission on Human Rights resolutions 1992/11 of 21 February 1992,[6] 1993/13 of 26 February 1993,[7] 1994/12 of 25 February 1994,[8] 1995/16 of 24 February 1995,[9] 1996/10 of 11 April 1996,[10] 1997/11 of 3 April 1997,[11] 1998/25 of 17 April 1998,[12] 1999/26 of 26 April 1999,[13] and resolution 2000/12 of 17 April 2000,[14] as well as resolution 1996/23 of 29 August 1996 of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities,[15]

Recalling its resolution 47/134 of 18 December 1992, in which it reaffirmed that extreme poverty and exclusion from society constituted a violation of human dignity and stressed the need for a complete and in-depth study of extreme poverty, based on the experience and the thoughts of the poorest people,

Recognizing that the eradication of extreme poverty is a major challenge within the process of globalization and requires coordinated and continued policies through decisive national action and international cooperation,

Reaffirming that the existence of widespread extreme poverty inhibits the full and effective enjoyment of human rights and might, in some situations, constitute a threat to the right to life, its immediate alleviation and eventual eradication must remain a high priority for the international community,

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[5] Resolution S-24/2, annex.

[6] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1992, Supplement No. 2* (E/1992/22), chap. II, sect. A.

[7] Ibid., 1993, *Supplement No. 3* and corrigenda (E/1993/23 and Corr.2, 4 and 5), chap. II, sect. A.

[8] Ibid., 1994, *Supplement No. 4* and corrigendum (E/1994/23 and Corr.1), chap. II, sect. A.

[9] Ibid., 1995, *Supplement No. 3* and corrigenda (E/1995/23 and Corr.1 and 2), chap. II, sect. A.

[10] Ibid., 1996, *Supplement No. 3* (E/1996/23), chap. II, sect. A.

[11] Ibid., 1997, *Supplement No. 3* (E/1997/23), chap. II, sect. A.

[12] Ibid., 1998, *Supplement No. 3* (E/1998/23), chap. II, sect. A.

[13] Ibid., 1999, *Supplement No. 3* (E/1999/23), chap. II, sect. A.

[14] Ibid., 2000, *Supplement No. 3* (E/2000/23), chap. II, sect. A.

[15] See E/CN.4/1997/2-E/CN.4/Sub.2/1996/41, chap. II, sect. A.

Recalling the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[16]

Noting with satisfaction the interim and progress reports[17] submitted to the Commission on Human Rights by the independent expert on the question of human rights and extreme poverty and the recommendations contained therein,

1. *Reaffirms* that extreme poverty and exclusion from society constitute a violation of human dignity and that urgent national and international action is therefore required to eliminate them;

2. *Reaffirms also* that it is essential for States to foster participation by the poorest people in the decision-making process in the societies in which they live, in the promotion of human rights and in efforts to combat extreme poverty and for people living in poverty and vulnerable groups to be empowered to organize themselves and to participate in all aspects of political, economic and social life, particularly the planning and implementation of policies that affect them, thus enabling them to become genuine partners in development;

3. *Emphasizes* that extreme poverty is a major issue to be addressed by Governments, civil society and the United Nations system, including international financial institutions, and, in this context, reaffirms that political commitment is a prerequisite for the eradication of poverty;

4. *Recognizes* that surmounting extreme poverty constitutes an essential means to the full enjoyment of political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights, and reaffirms the interrelationship among these goals;

5. *Reaffirms* that the existence of widespread absolute poverty inhibits the full and effective enjoyment of human rights and renders democracy and popular participation fragile;

6. *Reaffirms also* the commitments on development and poverty eradication contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration;[16]

7. *Invites* the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, within the framework of the implementation of the United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, to continue to give appropriate attention to the question of human rights and extreme poverty;

8. *Notes with appreciation* the specific actions taken by the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to mitigate the effects of extreme poverty on children and the efforts of the United Nations Development Programme to give priority to the search for some means of alleviating poverty within the framework of the relevant resolutions, and urges them to continue in this work;

9. *Calls upon* States, United Nations bodies, in particular the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Development Programme, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations to continue to give appropriate attention to the links between human rights and extreme poverty;

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[16] Resolution 55/2.

[17] E/CN.4/1999/48 and E/CN.4/2000/52.

10. *Decides* to consider this question further at its fifty-seventh session under the sub-item entitled "Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms".